

# ELLEN CAREY

## *Let There Be Light: the Black Swans of Ellen Carey*

Exhibition 5 May - 25 June 2022



Portrait of the artist by Douglas Levere

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Paris, April 2022 - *Let There Be Light: The Black Swans of Ellen Carey* opens as a visual *vade mecum* at Galerie Miranda in spring 2022. A première for her new bodies of work, and the artist's second personal exhibition at Galerie Miranda, Ellen Carey's handbook guides us through photography's nearly two centuries' arc of light, photogram, colour and Polaroid as seen in her constantly intersecting practices *Photography Degree Zero* (Polaroid) and *Struck by Light* (darkroom).

### *Crush & Pull with Rollbacks & Penlights*

For the 21st century, for Paris, the 'City of Light', Ellen Carey brings her arc into the future with *Crush & Pull with Rollbacks & Penlights*, a completely new 21st century photo-object from Polaroid's monumental negative, which allows Carey, its 'camera operator', to reposition 'light drawing' anew. It highlights Polaroid and its huge 20 X 24 camera as one of the medium's 20th century game changers. The 'Black Swan' theory sees unexpected events become game changers in this, the global world, as it is, now. Carey's performance in the 'black box' of the darkroom — folding, crushing, creasing, and nothing seen until it is finished — abounds with affinities to the Surrealist drawing game of the "exquisite corpse".

### *Finitogram*

For *Let There Be Light: The Black Swans of Ellen Carey*, the artist introduces another new photo-object, the *Finitogram*. Here, she gathered abandoned sheets of photographic paper bearing random chemical marks 'striking a pose' as light drew. She sees the once-hidden, latent image become visible. Like her practice in Polaroid, the object begins at the zero of an unknown time, made somewhere in the void of the dark room, and left behind unfinished. However the object may have travelled through Dada, Surrealism, and Duchamp's 'ready-made' visitations; her re-invented ready-made now presents as a new 'self'. Ellen Carey's *Finitogram*, from the Italian *non finito* for incomplete works of art, re-interprets the photogram, its legacy, and its practitioners. It reverses the circle of time in its image-making. The medium's "picture signs" in landscape, portrait, and still life, and individuals' names do not exist. In their places we have a 19th century term 'camera operator' with the unnamed, unknown *Anon* – new companions in the category of 'vernacular photography'.

Ellen Carey's *Finitogram* project is a portfolio of light sensitive, 10x8 inch pictures of nothing that began in conditions like those in Carey's sightless, color darkroom based in time, total darkness, and invisibility. These non-images are unpredictable as they change in palette and enlarge in form. As the chemical clock ticks, this new getting ready-to-be-made from its once unfinished state, by time and by light, unfolds, becomes *Finitogram*.

The historic photogram re-named as ready-made adds to Carey's handbook guide through photography's nearly two centuries' arc of light, photogram, colour and Polaroid. *Photography Degree Zero* (the artist's Polaroid practice) and *Struck by Light* (her darkroom practice) visually consult Talbot, Daguerre, and Anna Atkins, the powerhouse tripod of 19th century game changers. Talbot's negative-to-positive duality of the photogram-as-image is doubled, while Daguerre is mirrored in the glossy polish of Polaroid's pristine surface and crisp picture. Talbot's soft-focus, non-color compositions in blurry outlines see light's 'shadow' while Prussian blue sees colour-as-light transformed in Anna Atkins' cyanotype images. Each of them used light with light-sensitive processes to create their images – all unique pictures, all-in-one totalities – originating visual impact for which the gestalt is c'est.

The 'Black Swan' theory sees unexpected events become game changers in this global world as it is now. Carey's performance in the 'black box' of the darkroom — folding, crushing, creasing, picturing nothing until finished, abounds with affinities to the Surrealist drawing game of "exquisite corpse". When light becomes visible the object speaks. Ellen Carey's photographic objects say craquelure, parabola, hue, abstract, process, minimal, photogram, black swans, light, beauty, color, wonder, invention, innovation. cFor Ellen Carey and for us, this is the language of *Crush & Pull with Rollbacks & Penlights*, and the language of *Finitogram ...!*

#### Artist biography

ELLEN CAREY (born 1959, USA)

Ellen Carey's experimental Polaroid practice dates from 1983, when the Polaroid Artists Support Program invited her to work at the Polaroid 20X24 Studio. There, she created her Neo-Geo Self-Portraits (1984-87) followed by her stacked installations Abstractions (1988-95). Her pioneering Pull (1996) and Rollback (1997) initiated her practice *Photography Degree Zero* (1996-2022), that is continued today with her latest body of Polaroid work, *Crush & Pull*. Ellen Carey's work has been the subject of 60 one-person exhibitions and seen in hundreds of group exhibitions, found in the permanent collections of art and photography museums including: The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, George Eastman Museum, Norton Museum of Art, Wadsworth Atheneum, New Britain Museum of American Art, Museum at the Chicago Art Institute, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of Art, Vassar College, Yale University Art Gallery and Centre Pompidou and Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) in Paris. Corporate and private collections include JP Morgan Chase Collection, The LeWitt Foundation and the Sir Elton John Collection. In 2021, her work featured in the exhibition organized by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France at the Grand Palais in Paris, entitled 'Noir et Blanc: une esthétique de la photographie'.

For full biographical detail please visit the artist's website: <http://www.ellencareyphotography.com>

Wikipédia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen\\_Carey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Carey)



ELLEN CAREY

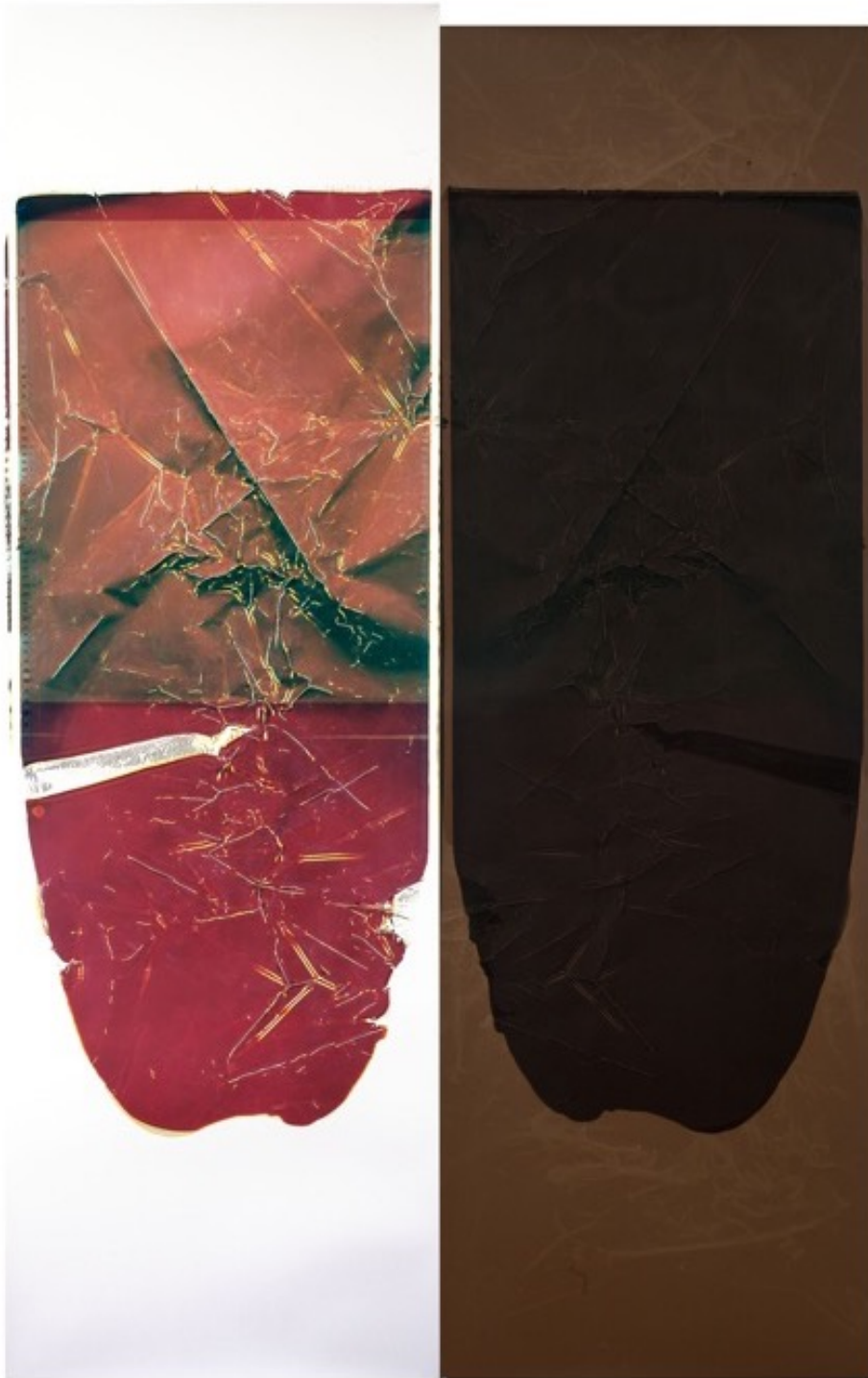
*Crush & Pull with Rollback & Penlight (YMC) 2021 (triptyque)*  
Polaroid 20 X 24 Color Positive (3) and Negative (3) Prints = 6 total prints  
60"H x 22"W (each) or 20"H x 66"W (suite)  
150 x 56 cm (each) or 150 x 168 cm (suite)

Unique



ELLEN CAREY  
*Crush & Pull (Yellow) 2019*  
Polaroid 20 X 24 Color Positive (1) and Negative (1) Prints  
60"H x 22"W (each) or 60"H x 66"W (suite)

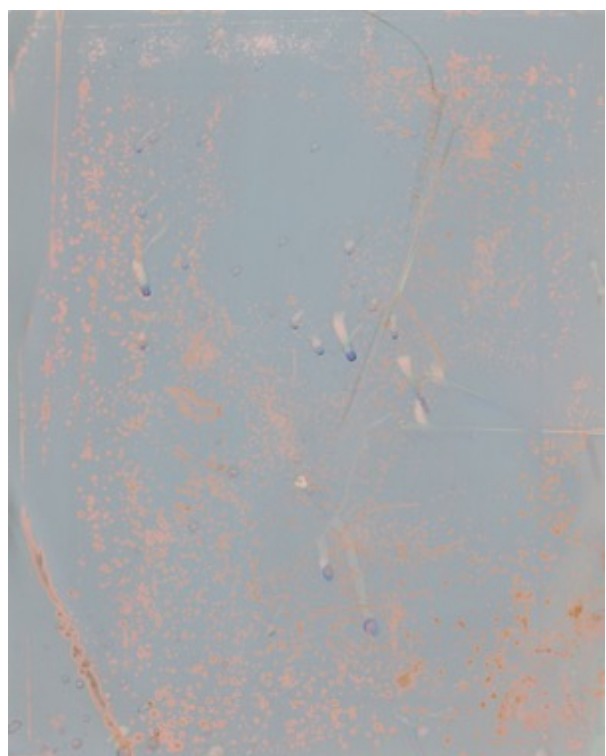
Unique



ELLEN CAREY  
*Crush & Pull (Red) 2019*  
Polaroid 20 X 24 Color Positive (1) and Negative (1) Prints  
60"H x 22"W (each) or 60"H x 66"W (suite)

Unique

FINITOGRAMS



*FINITOGRAMS*  
Colour Photograms, 2022  
25x20cm  
Unique

Galerie Miranda: à propos

Galerie Miranda was founded in 2018 by Miranda Salt, French-Australian who has lived and worked in the 10th arrondissement of Paris since her arrival in France in 1995. Specialised in fine art photography, the gallery presents international artists and works celebrated in their own country but little known in France and Europe. Inaugurated on International Women's Day 2018, the gallery's opening cycle of exhibitions featured solo presentations by prominent women artists Jo Ann Callis, Nancy Wilson-Pajic, Marina Berio and Ellen Carey. Amongst the other artists represented, or with works available, at the gallery are Merry Alpern, Peggy Anderson, Jo Bradford, John Chiara, Sally Gall, Gary Green, Chuck Kelton, Gerard Dalla Santa, Chloe Sells, Laura Stevens, Arne Svenson, Terri Weifenbach.

The gallery participates in fairs and private salons and is also a bookshop with a curated selection of publications on photography in French and English. Galerie Miranda is situated in Paris' vibrant 10th arrondissement at 21 rue du Château d'Eau, close to the Place de la République and 100 metres from the former site, on rue Léon Jouhaux, of Louis Daguerre's wonderful Diorama and laboratory, destroyed by fire in 1839.

Gallery website: [www.galeriemiranda.com](http://www.galeriemiranda.com)

GALLERY ADDRESS AND HOURS

Galerie Miranda  
21 rue du Château d'Eau  
75010 Paris France  
metro: République, exit #5 Magenta  
Tuesday-Friday 2-7 pm / Saturday noon-7pm  
or by appointment  
[www.galeriemiranda.com](http://www.galeriemiranda.com)

